Radio Days

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Radio club alumni made the scene at homecoming 2014

WFCS alumni will never let a little rain spoil a good time. Despite Saturday's precip there was too much happening, too much fun and too much great food during Homecoming 2014, Oct. 10-11, to dampen the good times.

Friday's activities began at 7 p.m. with the reunions in the Student Center ballroom, this year drawing the highest turnout yet--200 alumni, according to the CCSU Alumni Association. The WFCS alumni table became quickly populated with some regulars, newcomers and other alumni friends. Bob Zotter, who hung out at the station during the early 1970s and now has his own sound company--RMS Audio--was the evening's DJ entertainer.

Among the WFCS and WCCS alumni at the Friday evening event: Marvin Weil, Dick Wiszniak, Robb Warner, Tony Augeri, Fred Agee and Paul Koscak. WCCS alumni and former Central Recorder columnist Deborah (Intravia) Wilson shared some of her vintage publications. A professionally presented and delectable assortment of hors d'oeuvres, cheeses, salads, sautéed vegetables, stromboli and desserts were available throughout the evening along with beer, wine and other beverages.

Saturday began early. Current broadcaster and alumni Steve Strinie drove from his vacation home in Massachusetts to launch the WFCS homecoming broadcasts at 7 a.m. Early risers were treated to his astute musical selections from the 60s, 70s and 80s that hardly get aired elsewhere. His early-morning pitch for coffee was rewarded by a kindly listener.

Then from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., the studio swelled with homecoming visitors. Coffee and pastry was provided thanks to Susan Sweeney, associate director of student activities, while WFCS alumni from 1972 through 1988 each did half-hour shows. Alumni Mike Johnson and Colin Burke shared a show,

RADIO CLUB ALUMNI--TOP, from left: Bill Pearse '75, Diane Zareski '74, Paul Koscak '73, Tony Augeri '73. MIDDLE--Marvin Weil '72, Neil Johnson, (future alumni, son of Mike Johnson '88) Colin Burke '88. BOTTOM--Deborah (Intravia) Wilson '70, WCCS newscaster and Central Recorder columnist. RIGHT--Robb Warner '77, spins his vinyl collection on the air.

together filling an hour with music, recollections and Central anecdotes.

By mid-morning radio club alumni commuted between the station and the homecoming brunch in the alumni tent set up at the Kaiser parking lot. Throughout the airtimes, Steve Strinie and current WFCS alumni broadcaster Melissa Evans assisted the homecoming broadcasters with operations.

Saturday's festivities continued into the early evening: a football game, highlighted by another alumni tent just off the end zone with food and refreshments and then an after-game party back at the Kaiser lot tent with more food, refreshments and a band. Nobody leaves homecoming hungry--or thirsty!

AT SATURDAY'S BRUNCH from left: Joyce (Josh) Mastrangelo '72, Paul Koscak '73, Robb Warner '77, Paul Grange '74 and Steve Strinie '83.

Homecoming shows now a 28-year tradition

How did it all happen? Quite logically, really.

After a robust turnout at the first WCCS/WFCS reunion in 1986 during a summer picnic at the home of Peter and Wendy Ciparelli in Ellington, the sentiment was "let's do it again." And with homecoming just a few months ahead, why wait another year?

So WFCS management was approached with an idea: Would you be open to let radio club alumni support homecoming by letting them do one of their old shows? Management was immediately interested (Let's face it, Saturday morning slots are not the most coveted among student broadcasters.).

WFCS faculty advisor Scott Olsen and station manager Joel Riley worked with WCCS/WFCS alumni Paul Koscak to open the Saturday morning schedule. Former broadcaster Dick Wiszniak gained the support of the alumni association in reaching out to radio club alumni. Letters (Real letters, that is. There was no Internet then.) were sent out to radio club alumni and the Saturday morning shifts for Homecoming 1986 quickly filled. Here are some past homecoming shifts.

Shift	Homecoming 2014	Homecoming 2009	Homecoming 1991
0830 - 0900	Guy Esposito	Robb Warner	Peter Kemp
0900 - 0930	Marvil Weil	Peter Ciparelli	Rob Branham
0930 - 1000	Robb Warner	John Sarra	Steve Mead

1000 - 1030	Paul Koscak	Tony Augeri	Bob Brown
1030 - 1100	Tony Augeri	Tom Larson	Paul Koscak
1100 - 1130	Bob Rapice	Bob Rapice	Bob Rapice
1130 - 1200	Mike Johnson	Sue Gifford Deleon	John Sarra
1200 - 1230	Colin Burke	Randy Shambler	Peter Ciparelli
1230 - 1300	----------	Keith Hall	Paul Grange

Devastating details still fresh in mind of this WFCS alumni

It's remarkable how even the smallest details surrounding a tragic event become burnished in our memory. Most of us know exactly what we were doing when terrorists attacked the country on Sept. 11, 2001 or when we lost the space shuttle Challenger in 1986 or when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. Psychologists claim the more something impacts our emotions, the more likely we'll remember our personal surroundings at the time.

WFCS alumni Evan Kramer was at the radio station when the news that former Beatle John Lennon was killed shocked the music world. Evan recalls how he became part of the radio club and how it became the backdrop of that tragic event.

It was September of 1980 and I was a freshman at Central. During orientation, I strolled into the Student Center with a friend from high school and her new roommate. Halfway down the hall and tucked into a corner, across from the Central Recorder student newspaper office, I noticed WFCS, 90.1 FM. Little did I know then, that would be the place where I'd be spending the better part of my next four years.

In high school, I was an avid album collector, always looking for bargains at the local Caldor's department store. Now, with about 500 records in a grapefruit crate, a few concerts under my belt and a developing ear for quality sound, I thought the radio club would be a cool place to check out.

I quickly learned I had similar musical interests as the members of the executive board and I was encouraged to join. I passed the test for my Third Class FCC license (required at the time to broadcast on a college radio station) and recorded a "demo" tape for my audition. After a few afternoon shifts training on the air, I earned one of the coveted evening time slots from 8 p.m. until midnight. I was now "Evan In The Evening."

Nights at the Student Center were quiet, except for the party in the WFCS studio. The monitor speakers were cranked up loud and the lights on the amplifier driving those speakers were pulsing from normal green to overdrive red. Meanwhile, the voltage optimizer ensured that the few kindred souls tuned to 90.1 received 10 watts of perfection (The optimizer is an

IN THE STUDIO--Evan Kramer in 1984 with Collins board in the background.

electronic device that prevents distorted audio from being transmitted.).

There I was, alone in a dimly lit studio with fifteen thousand record albums on the shelves. What a great gig: I got to jam for a few hours rocking to my favorite tunes, perfecting my slip-cue skills and performing seamless segways by my favorite artists--The Doors, Steely Dan,The Allman Brothers, Janis Joplin, Little Feat, Crosby Stills Nash and Young, Traffic, Bob Dylan and The Grateful Dead.

In those days, there was an Associated Press Model 20 teletype machine located in the hallway of the studio. It ran 24 hours a day. It was like an automated typewriter on steroids printing news, features, weather, sports and other information delivered through a special telephone connection, "the wire" as it's called in the news business. We would rip news copy to read on the air from the long strand of paper that rolled from the teletype and collected into a nearby pail.

The machine would periodically sound its bell whenever there was a breaking story. Up to five chimes meant a big story was about to appear. Except for the occasional weather update and the time Lech Walesa led a strike at the former Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk, my shift was pretty routine with few chimes.

But on Dec. 8,1980 at about 10 p.m., the machine rang aloud. I was startled by the alarm and quickly went to see what the commotion was about. I read as the machine typed that John Lennon had just been shot dead by Mark David Chapman in front of the Dakota, the building where he lived in New York City.

I read the copy over the airwaves and was surprised that a few listeners called to talk. At the time, I was more familiar with Paul McCartney's solo efforts than that of John Lennon's, but I decided to pay respect and dedicate my remaining time on the air playing Lennon's music and taking requests.

One caller in particular was persistent in requesting that I play Working Class Hero. Unfamiliar with the song, I respectfully complied. Unknown to me, in 1973 the FCC lodged a complaint with WGTB, the Georgetown University radio station, for playing that song where John says "but you're still f---ing peasants as far as I can see"--several times!

I let the song play on. I only remembered being warned by the general manager not to play Steppenwolf's "The Pusher."

The next day I heard that I joined the ranks of Howard Cosell as he broke the news of John Lennon's death on ABC's Monday Night Football.

Evan Kramer, originally from Waterbury, graduated in 1985 with a major in communications. He lives in Michigan and is a vice president at Citibank Specialty Partnerships.

Country is 'genuine' says student broadcaster

For those alumni broadcasters who came of age as progressive rock began toppling Top-40, it's hard to imagine anything but good ol' rock filling the college radio airwaves. That's not the case today at WFCS. The station has diverse programming including jazz, reggae and even a Sinatra show that's been popular for years.

But country? You bet.

MANAGING THE MUSIC--Alyssa Rankin programs the songs during her Tuesday show.

Alyssa Rankin '15, an economics major, says the first CD she owned was by Shania Twain and it was played "all day," as she recalls. Now, as a WFCS broadcaster, Alyssa devotes at least half of her show to country music.

Alyssa says she's attracted to the stories woven into most country tunes. "They're genuine," she remarked, citing songs by artist Brad Paisley as an example. She also appreciates the patriotic themes grounded in many of those story lines. "Country music is all about America," she added.

Catch Alyssa's show on Tuesday from 6 - 8 p.m.

Management style still familiar after all these years

The constitution. The executive board. Sound familiar? Radio club alumni--for perhaps the past 40 years at least--will surely recognize these institutions. And they still continue to guide station management today.

The radio club constitution, last updated in 2013 and again in 2014, is a public document posted on Central's collegiate link and requires a 3/4 majority vote by the station membership to approve any changes, explained Joe Durant, WFCS's general manager.

Policy, such as allowing guests during a show, the number of required new releases that must be played and creating new positions, is set by the executive board. Four members--the general manager, director of development, program director and public relations director--make up the board.

Daily activity is handled by the executive council. Guided by the constitution, the council can issue verbal or written warnings for infractions. The council can remove broadcasters who continue to violate policies or persist with unauthorized activities. The council is large, ten members: the executive board, the station's five music directors (two for Radio 200, metal, RPM, and urban) and the training director.

Rocky Hill vets staying warmer this winter thanks to WFCS

Residents of Rocky Hill's Veterans Home will soon receive some new winter clothing thanks to the staff of WFCS that collected the big donation during its "Sock it to me Drive," that kicked off Dec. 1. The drive took its name from the socks, gloves, hats, long johns and similar cold weather gear produced by the collection. The UConn Health Center also contributed.

"It's time to take care of them because they took care of us," said broadcaster Peter Varhol, who organized the drive for the veterans. Peter, who attended Central early in his career and then worked for 32 years in Connecticut state service before retiring in 2010, hosts a jazz show on WFCS Tuesday mornings from 10 a.m. to noon.

GOT THE GOODS--from left: Alyssa Rankin '15, music director, Mike Mason '18, new DJ, and Zack Peruta '15, music director, pose with collection box of new clothing destined soon for the Connecticut State Veterans Home in Rocky Hill.

WFCS rolling out new brand

The radio club continues to introduce itself in new ways.

While the adage "Where the music still matters" is still a well-used tag among the on-air talent, stay tuned for another catchy slogan--"The Edge." This newest branding evolved from WFCS's position on the dial, 107.7, which is, well, the edge of the FM band, said General Manager Joe Durant. Joe explained the station needed some motto connected to the frequency. The Edge not only satisfies that but also creates an aura that suggests many meanings--exploring new territory, pushing the limit, standing apart, striving ahead.

CCSU President Jack Miller has also helped brand the station. In an exclusively recorded five-second station identification, he introduces himself and then tells listeners what station they're tuned to.

Trending media brings WFCS broadcasters to The Big Apple

In October, five WFCS staffers learned what's trending in college radio and the music industry by attending the College Music Journal Music Marathon in New York City. The annual five-day event provides networking opportunities with college broadcasters, record label companies and promotion firms, including such legacy companies as Warner Brothers, Columbia and Capitol records.

College radio stations from throughout the U.S. and Europe were represented at the marathon, said Joe Durant, WFCS's general manager who attended the event.

"There's a very strong push in college radio for Australian artists," he said.

While at the event, the WFCS group discovered a company that may create a promotional bonanza for the station. "We're looking at a business arrangement where we guarantee an interview every month with an artist this company recommends. In return the company notifies all its clients by e-mail to tune into the interview," Joe explained. "We're anticipating a contract."

Alyssa Rankin '15; Nikita Khrenov '16, public relations and metal director; Andrew Kelley '14, program director; and Zack Peruta '15, music manager, also attended the marathon.

By Paul Koscak '73